



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development
Diane M. Sugimura, Director

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE PRIORITIES OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

October 4, 2010

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3011405

Address: 324 NE 45th St

Applicant: John Adams (JA), AIA with Stuart Silk Architects for
Jeff and Wanda Garfield, Bedroom and More

Board members present: Salone Habibuddin (SH)
Joe Hurley (JH)
Craig Parsons (CP)
Tricia Reisenauer (TR)

DPD staff present: Colin Vasquez (CV), Senior Land Use Planner

VICINITY INFORMATION

The site is located on the northwest corner of NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE. This is a vacant lot with remaining foundation walls of the previous structure on the south fifty-two feet of the parcel. The remaining portion to the north is currently paved and has been used primarily as a parking lot.

Topography The site is relatively flat along NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE, and rises to the northwest corner about eight (8) feet. The alley to the rear of the site is significantly higher than the street level due to an usually steep incline as the alley rises from the sidewalk edge.



Access Streets bound the site on two sides. NE 45th St to the south is classified as a Principal Arterial. 4th Ave NE bounds the property to the east. A paved alley connection 4th Ave NE and Latona Ave NE limits the site to the north.

Zoning and overlay designations The site is zoned NC3P-40 overlaid by the Wallingford Residential Urban Village.

Neighborhood Context: Land Use NE 45th St is very diverse in terms of uses ranging from sidewalk cafes, supermarket stores, restaurants, bars, cinemas, eclectic shops as well as multi-family and single-family residential uses. The majority of this use diversification is concentrated along the main arterials in the neighborhood, NE 45th St and Stone Way, as well as the areas in proximity to the water to the south.

Neighborhood Context: Architecture The architecture of the single residential uses remains relatively consistent through the years. However the architectural character of the commercial and multi-family uses along the main arterials is highly varied due in part to the different types of businesses. Newer buildings used to auto-repairs, fast foods and supermarket stores bring their own “corporate identity” to the neighborhood, diversifying the architecture. Some older buildings still carry the neighborhood’s original architecture by preserving a few architectural features, details and storefront configuration.

Community Landmarks Landmarks in the neighborhood include the Good Shepherd Center and Gas Works Park. Additionally the original Dick’s Drive-In founded in 1954, the Guild 45th Theatre, and Murphy’s Bar are all located along NE 45th St.

The site offers the potential to serve as a gateway to the entire Wallingford neighborhood even though the structures in the immediate vicinity of the site are not of particular architectural value or historic interest.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a four-story plus basement mixed use building. The basement and first two floors are intended to be the new location for Bedrooms & More, a household furniture store. The third floor will be designated as a separate office use. The fourth floor is intended to be a single residential unit. The commercial square footage will total approximately 16,000 square feet and the residence will occupy approximately 3,500 square feet. On-site parking will have 5-6 stalls.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Jeff Garfield — Bedrooms and More — introduced himself and gave a history of his many years in business in Wallingford. He noted that it is his wife and his goal to live and work in the proposed building and pass the building on to their sons. It is the family’s desire to create a project at the entry to Wallingford that welcomes person to the neighborhood and establishes “a tone of high quality retail buildings for the 45th St. business district.”

Three development options were presented by John Adams — **Alternative 1: Street Level.** Places the retail space to the south and east of the property, covering most of the NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE sides. All the required parking is located behind the retail area, with access from the alley. Departure required for façade depth and parking quantity mix. The main entrance to the retail space is located at the corner of NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE. Lobby

entrance for the upper floors is located along 4th Ave NE. **Building Massing.** This corner placed building has its longest side along 4th Ave NE. This alternative locates the parking behind the retail space and the main building entrance, and creates an opportunity to bring retail and transparent façade along most of 4th Ave NE. The residential unit at the top of the building has one terrace to the north, one terrace to the south, and a terrace and planters on the east side, creating a recess in the massing and lowering the perception of the building's height. The corner massing of the building will be differentiated as an architectural feature and principal entry.

Alternative 2: Street Level. Places the retail space to the south and east of the property, covering most of the NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE sides. All the required parking is located behind the retail area, with access from the alley. Departure required for façade depth and parking quantity mix. The main entrance to the retail space is located at the corner of NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE. Lobby entrance for the upper floors is located along 4th Ave NE. Street level is located at the corner of NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE. **Building Massing.** This corner placed building has its longest side along 4th Ave NE. This alternative locates the parking behind the retail space and the main building entrance, and creates an opportunity to bring retail and transparent façade along most of 4th Ave NE. The residential unit at the top of the building has one terrace to the north and one bigger terrace to the south, creating a recess in the massing and lowering the perception of the building's height. The corner massing of the building will be an architectural feature for the full height of the structure.

Alternative 3: Street Level. This alternative meets all the Land Use Code development standards and has no departures. It places the retail space to the south of the property, covering the full width of the NE 45th St and portion of 4th Ave NE. All the required parking occupies the north end of the 4th Ave NE façade and would be screened by a wall. The site is too narrow to accommodate a complying landscaping buffer. The main entrance to the retail space at street level is located at the corner of NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE. The lobby entrance for the upper floors is at the southwest corner of the site along NE 45th St. **Building Massing.** This corner placed building has its longest side along 4th Ave NE. Saving the tree located just east of the property line by the main building entrance will create a fourteen by thirty foot notch into the building along the full height of the structure, assuming a 15 foot tree buffer. This alternative creates a full height blank wall along the eastern property line in order to hide the parking away. The residential unit at the top the building has one terrace to the south.

The corner massing of the building will be differentiated as an architectural feature and retail entry.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

Preliminary departures are noted above in each alternative.

BOARD QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The Board had the following questions and clarifying comments, with responses from the applicant:

- Is the maple tree on site in fact an exceptional tree as defined by the City of Seattle? **DPD** Bill Ames, SDOT, has determined in his email that it is designated as such.
- CP mentioned that the NE Board has dealt with exception trees in the past including “Big Red” in the Roosevelt Neighborhood.
- The applicant presented letters and emails from Bill Ames and a third party Arborist who recommend the removal of the tree.
- The Board concluded that for the sake of deliberation for this meeting they would proceed with the assumption of removal of the tree.
- The Board asked about truck access and load/unload. JA stated that due to the poorly graded alley profile truck loading off the alley may be impracticable and detailed discussions with SDOT to determine best approach to alley would be necessary.
- Board asked how trash pickup occurs on alley. JA asked Owner to respond as they are residents along the alley and the Owner stated trash trucks back in to alley.
- Board asked if the parking area would be secured. JA responded no, but later in meeting clarified that it may be necessary to secure parking area during non-business hours.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately four members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance meeting. The following comments were offered:

- Resident of house two doors to the north of the townhouses along 4th Ave spoke first. This resident requested consideration of widening the tree pits to extend into the roadway to accommodate large trees. Stated road had been widened some time ago for the first part of 4th Ave running north from 45th and that if tree pits were extended into the parking lane only a few parking spaces would be lost. Requested consideration is given to north facade of the proposed building as it overlooks the townhouses across the alley.
 - The resident also asked some consideration be given to the “friendliness” of the 4th Ave facade.
- Two residents of the Cosmopolitan Apartment building spoke next. They stated that several car vs. pedestrian accidents have occurred at the intersection of 4th and 45th and wondered what pedestrian safety and crosswalk improvements could be made.

Most of the comments made by members of the public are not under the purview of the design review board and probably better addressed to SDOT. The suggested comments should be forwarded by DPD to ensure that they were properly routed.

Board Deliberation

- The Board believes that it was a positive feature that the project was to be owner occupied.
- The Board noted the owner’s demonstration of long term interest in the neighborhood.
- Salone Habibuddin (SH) asked the Owner how people typically arrived at their store, by car on foot etc. JG responded that historical people came from all over to buy their products but recently there has been an increasing trend of people from the

neighborhood walking into the store. SH noted that the new site is somewhat further away from the more pedestrian oriented core of the urban village and closer toward the highway.

- CP suggested that the “hot button” issue with pedestrian access was in part addressed by the desire to maximize transparency at the street level facade and that wrapping the transparent aspects of the building around the corner for the full length of the 4th Ave facade was “highly desirable”.
- Tricia Reisenauer (TR) suggested that some sort of acknowledgement of the more residential character to the north might be desirable along the 4th Ave facade. TR acknowledged stated desire to hold the corner with the building and responded to that intention positively.
- SH said she was pleased to see the residential entry located along 4th Ave.
- CP stated that he felt that page 12 of the EDG package was very effective in demonstrating intent of facade design.
- JH felt that the EDG package was very strong and felt the logic of removing the tree was clearly demonstrated and felt the project was not reasonable achievable with the tree in place.
- CP noted that blank facade of the third scheme was not desirable.
- TR remarked that the presence of the tree does not add to the value of the project as a whole.
- CV asked the Board to provide input on signage.
- CP asked the Owner what their retail experience has been with signage. JG discussed how signage at their current building has not been successful and people don't seem to notice it. Wanda Garfield (WG) referenced the old signage for the Sherwood hotel.
- CP suggested that retail spaces that have good visual transparency don't have to “yell at people” with signage.
- SH indicated she enjoyed some of the unusual signage of Wallingford.
- TR remarked she felt it was important we were considering signage at this point of the project.

DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance and identified by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's *Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings* of highest priority to this project:

A. Site Planning

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility *The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.*

A-4 Human Activity *New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.*

A-10 Corner Lots

The Board recommends adding something by way of vegetation to the south side of the building to add interest to the 2nd floor level as they can be seen from 36th Avenue. This may include trees or enclosing the parking lot. SMS will investigate this but notes that enclosing the parking lot may include a financial hardship because it would mean adding mechanical ventilation to the parking area.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale *Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less-intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.*

The Board suggested B items take care of themselves in context of this project.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

C-1 Architectural Context *New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.*

C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency *Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept.*

Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its façade walls.

The Board reinforce that human scale will be important.

The Board is interested in a reinterpretation of local form but not necessarily a 19th century copy — *“the building should not be a “throw back”.*

The Board touched on importance of screening dumpsters from residential properties to the north.

The Board asked to see Green factor proposal for next meeting.

The Board asked for a site section for next meeting.

Board made to following statements about departures:

- Inclined to grant reduction in trash area
- Inclined to grant facade depth reduction, JH said he would accept very willingly.
- Inclined to grant modified parking size mix with no larges.

D. Pedestrian Environment

- D-2 Blank Walls** Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.
- D-9 Commercial Signage** Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.
- D-10 Commercial Lighting** Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts evening hours.
- D-11 Commercial Transparency** Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.
- D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions** For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security.

DPD recommends that at the next design review meeting that more information be provide on the guidelines noted above.

E. Landscaping

- E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions** The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.

DPD recommends that at the next design review meeting that more information be provide on the terrace landscaping design.

NEXT STEPS

1. Submit application for Master Use Permit (MUP) application. Please include a written response to the guidance provided in this EDG. Plan on embedding the 11x17 colored elevations and landscape plans into the MUP plan set (4 per sheet).
2. At the next design review meeting, please submit a color and materials board. Please also provide colored renderings and/or graphics showing the relationship between the proposed development and the existing development on either side.